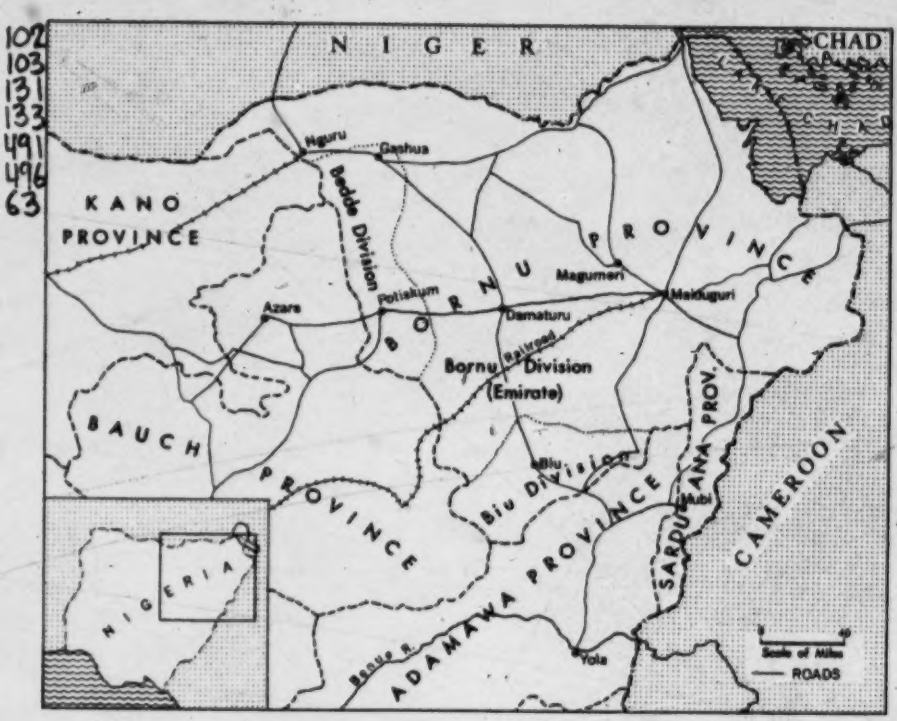
1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14



[P.ii]

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Today the empire of Bornu is a Muslim emirate, or kingdom, which forms a subdivision of Bornu Province in the northeastern corner of Nigeria. The emirate covers an area of 24,000 square miles and, according to the 1952 census, has a population of about 1 million people of whom 626,000 are Kanuri—the dominant ethnic group of the kingdom. There are also about 160,000 Fulani and Shuwa who tend their cattle in the area and who carry out a semi-nomadic way of life. Another 225,000 people belong to small pagan groups, from south of the province and the Cameroons, as well as from the Hausa-speaking areas to the west and from the other regions of Nigeria. The emirate also includes about 5000 non-Nigerians, who are from Europe, America, the Near East, and other African countries.

Including the emirate, Bornu Province has approximately 1,600,000 people, 750,000 of whom are Kanuri. Thus many Kanuri live outside the political boundaries of the emirate. Indeed Kanuri can be found in all major cities of northern Nigeria in substantial numbers as well as in the neighboring territories of Chad and Niger. In order to identify the population with a particular territory, however, it is convenient to think of the emirate sub-division of Bornu Province as Bornu, the traditional homeland of the Kanuri kingdom. These are the people who are the subject of this book; they describe themselves as "Kanuri—the people of Bornu." As noted above, outside this entity—of Bornu—there are many other Kanuri, and a political entity, Bornu Province. However, these will be referred to by their full names, while the word "Bornu" will be reserved for the political system, whose present expression, the emirate or kingdom, is continuous with the Bornu of pre-colonial times. This reflects as well the attitude of the people themselves, who use the term "Bornu" to refer primarily to the emirate rather than the larger area of Bornu Province.

One other point should be kept in mind about the population figures. There has been a more recent Nigerian census since 1952, and although the details are unknown as yet, it is generally accepted that the more recent figures are in the neighborhood of thirty-five to forty-five percent higher than those of 1952. This means that Bornu may actually have nearly 900,000 in population, and Bornu Province may reach as high as two million persons, as of 1966.

The Kanuri of Bornu live spread out over the entire area of the emirate, in 306 named and variously sized settlements, ranging from Maiduguri, the capital, with its 80,000 population, down to tiny hamlets of three or four households. Most of the people, about two-thirds of them, live in 248 named village units that range in size from 1000 to 5000. About one-quarter of the population, on the other hand, live in eleven cities whose population is 10,000 or over. This statistical information from the census masks an important point, however, for the towns and villages are really area units and each has within its territory, a set of satellite hamlets that often total to more than half the population of the town or village area. It is this pattern that gives to Bornu its "filled-up" quality even though the population density is approximately twenty-five to forty persons per square mile when calculated from the 1952 census figures or perhaps as much as forty to sixty persons per square mile on the basis of more recent counts. Riding out on horseback into the bush one never feels alone; here and there sprinkled in one or two mile intervals in all directions are little hamlets with their surrounding farmlands while more intermittently, perhaps every five or six miles, are the larger towns and villages. Ev-

101 This study was carried out among the Kanuri people of Bornu Province, Northern Nigeria. The writer and his wife were in Nigeria from August, 1956 until October, 1957. Almost all of that time was spent in the town of Geidam, in the northern part of the province.

A. Geography

131 1. Major geographic features.

Bornu Province is in the northeastern corner of Nigeria. It is bounded to the north by what was then Niger Territory, French West Africa (now the independent Republic of the Niger). [133] To the east lie the marshy shores of Lake Chad and, south of the lake, Cameroons, trusteeship territory administered as part of Bornu Province. The Yobe River, largest of the rivers flowing through Bornu into Chad, forms the northern border of the [161] province for much of its length. Maiduguri, the provincial capital, population 56,740, lies roughly in the geographic cen- [191] ter of the province. The main road through the province runs from Jos through Maiduguri and then on to Fort Lamy in Chad. [196] The railroad barely penetrates into Bornu, running from Kano and ending in the northwest tip of Bornu at Nguru, the second largest town in the province.

133 Bornu is a huge sandy plain, contrasting sharply with the rugged country of the Bauchi Plateau, which rises steeply to the southwest. South of the plain is the hilly area of Biu which is in Bornu Province. The flat plain extends eastward,

[text continues on p. 3]

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 MS14 Kanuri MS14

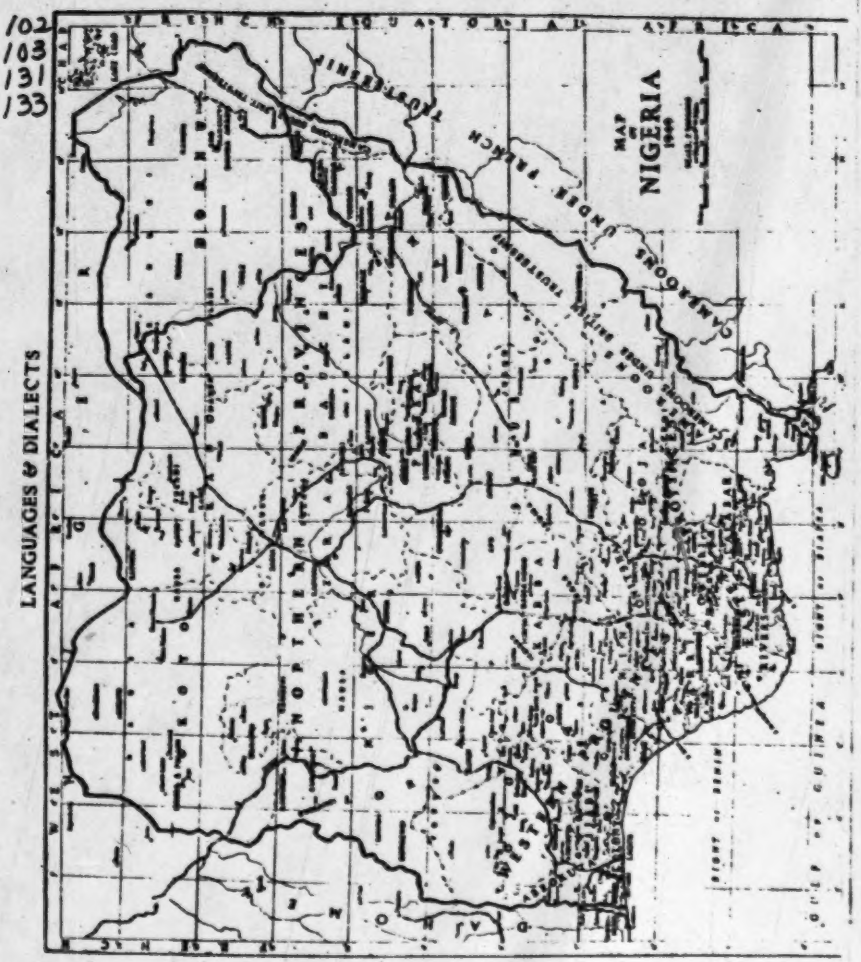


Figure 1 - Map of Nigeria

178 of the Kanuri, and the advantages which they have brought are readily understood. Other material changes--the postal system, telegraphs, electricity in Maiduguri, and the Maiduguri airport--only affect a small part of the population in the cities, and consequently are of minor importance.

654 178 Deliberate attempts have been made to institute changes in certain areas of Kanuri culture, with varying degrees of success. Agricultural programs have been introduced through the Bornu Native Authority. Veterinary and Forestry Depart- [743] ments also exist. Dispensaries run by Kanuri Malams exist in the larger towns. There is a hospital in Maiduguri staffed by [757] two European doctors. The Kanuri prefer their own form of treatment and rarely go to the dispensaries or to the hospital when ill. Nor do the Kanuri dispensars themselves have much faith in the medications which they distribute.

E. The Dynamics of Acculturation

101 The town of Geidam, in which the present study was carried [563] out, is in the northern part of Bornu, among a Kanuri sub-group 131 known as the Manga. Geidam is twenty-five miles south of Nigeria's northern boundary, a remote and somewhat isolated town 134 in one of the least developed provinces of Northern Nigeria. It is a town of mud surrounded by a world of sand, and the presence of the desert to the north is felt everywhere, in the land and in the people.

177 Though Kanuri culture is still an integrated and function- 121 ing whole, the influence of the Industrial West is bringing about

121 individual character, to an entire culture, many times the size of his single community.

The present study is, then, a community study, as must [101] usually be the case in the study of complex societies. The community is the town of Geidam, where the author and his wife lived for one year, from the ending of the rains in 1956 until the rains ceased once again in 1957.

A. The geography and ecology of Geidam.

162 632 Geidam, with its population of 11,032 is one of the largest towns in Bornu Province (see Table I) and represents urban Kanuri 563 culture. The people of the countryside between Geidam and 197 Nguru, some 110 miles to the west, are predominantly Manga, a Kanuri sub-group speaking a Kanuri dialect which differs slightly from Kanuri proper. To the east, towards Damasak, are Mobber, 101 another sub-group. In the town of Geidam, however, the towns- 197 [369] folk are Kanuri, and speak standard Kanuri. This is primarily because urban Kanuri in Geidam have more in common with urban Kanuri coming from other large towns and cities, and share more with them than they do with the farming peoples of the small villages surrounding Geidam.

131 Geographically, Geidam lies in the northernmost part of the province, in fact, the northernmost part of Nigeria, since the border separating Nigeria from the independent country of 133 Niger is only twenty miles north. The land is a flat sandy [137] plain, with scrub vegetation which becomes increasingly more

133 [137] [162] desert-like as one moves north from Geidam. The population to the north of Geidam continues to be Kanuri (or Manga), but its density declines rapidly as one moves directly north. Geidam lies on the Yobe River, usually referred to as the Komadugu Yobe River, a redundancy since komadugu means river in the Kanuri language. The Yobe is a slowly moving stream that empties into Lake Chad, approximately 100 miles east of Geidam. Many streams and rivers of the north flow for some months after the rains and then dry up completely. The Yobe, however, is large enough to continue to flow the year round. Before the rains it is reduced to a stream thirty or forty feet in width; after the rains the river reaches its flood crest, when it may extend over half a [505] mile in width. Though one could travel from Geidam to Lake Chad on the Yobe River, the Kanuri do not use the river for travel or [172] for commerce. Along the Yobe river, some twenty miles east of Geidam, lie the ruins of Birni Ngazargamo, the ancient capital of the Mais which was sacked by the Fulani. Hence Geidam is not [361] far from the old center of empire. Along the river, and still further on, along the shores of Lake Chad, are numerous villages and towns.

131 [134] The geographic location of Geidam, aside from the drier sandy nature of the land because of its northern location, is significant because of its situation in relation to Maiduguri, 131 633 491 the provincial capital, and to Nguru, the rail-head. Maiduguri, in the center of the province (see Figure 2), is important both because it is the administrative and commercial capital and be-

633 cause it lies on the main highway connecting Ft. Lamy with Jos.
131 Nguru, in the northwestern corner of the province, is the second
491 largest city in Bornu, and is particularly important because it
[496] marks the end of the rail line extending from Lagos via Jos.
Geidam is strategically located so that it benefits from trade with both. (see Figure 1) Unpaved roads connect Geidam with Nguru, directly east, and with Maiduguri, to the southeast. It would be about 130 miles from Geidam to Maiduguri if one went by the shortest possible route. The road leads directly south from Geidam, however, and then directly east, and the total dis-
131 tance covered amounts to 170 miles. Though distances are great
49 and the condition of the roads is very poor, trade is dependent
438 on trucks which are the life-line of the country. Goods come into Geidam by truck from both Maiduguri and Nguru. They are then distributed throughout the countryside by merchants and tradesmen, using camels and donkeys to transport their goods.
[366] Since no roads at all lead north into Niger and the Kanuri villages north of Geidam, nor do roads lead east along the Yobe River to the villages and towns there, Geidam is an important regional center of trade and commerce. Its geographic location is therefore an important factor in determining the nature of the community.

B. The Physical Nature of the Community.

491 The road from Maiduguri joins that from Nguru a few miles
[366] west of the town (see Figure 3). The sole road connecting Gei-

(frontispiece)

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Chapter I
The Setting

[1]

101 For at least a millenium the drama of empire has been played out in an immense area of Africa known as the western Sudan which lies at the southern fringe of the Sahara and stretches in a roughly east-west direction across the continent from the Atlantic to Lake Chad. [178] Borno is one of the oldest of these and has maintained itself as an [631] ongoing political unit from early times into the modern world. Today the empire is a Muslim Emirate included as a sub-division of Borno 162 Province in the Chad basin of northeastern Nigeria. The Emirate has [131] an area of approximately 24,000 square miles and a population of [161] 1,005,000 (1952 census) of which 626,000 are Kanuri, and 156,000 are Fulani and Shuwa nomads.(1) The remaining 224,000 people include an unspecified number of small pagan groups in the south of the Emirate together with other Nigerians mostly from the Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba tribes. There are as well 5,000 non-Nigerians including Levantines, Europeans and Africans from other countries.

132 The Emirate lies within latitudes 11 to 13 N. and longitudes [131] 11 to 13½ S. and has a typical sub-Saharan savannah climate. There is a mean daily maximum temperature of 94° F. from March to June and a mean daily minimum of 66° F. from July to February. The rainfall varies from north to south, being somewhat heavier in the south. Mean rainfall figures in inches per month at Maiduguri for the last thirty-six years are as follows:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
.01	-	.01	.25	1.59	2.56	6.81	8.80	4.23	.75	.01	-

(1) The Province as a whole has a population of 1,596,000 of which 753,000 are Kanuri. Thus over 80% of the present Kanuri population of the Province live within the boundaries of the Emirate.

175 642 [131] a large Empire with the result that Kanem became a well known state in the Islamic world of the 12th century. By the 13th century, Kanem had extended itself to include a large region in the Chad basin, including present day Bornu, and more importantly was in control of the central Sahara with its trade route to Tripoli.(1) Friendship was contracted with 175 648 the Hafsid rulers of Tunis, and we are told by Ibn Said writing at this time that a giraffe was sent by the King of Kanem to the Sultan of Tripoli [779] as a present. He further notes that the practice of Islam is widespread amongst the population of Kanem at this time.(2) Kachim Biri, the reigning monarch from 1242-43 A.D., ordered the construction of a traveler's house for Kanuri pilgrims in the city of Cairo.(3) At the other end of the Muslim world, in Spain, a poet from Kanem was employed at this period in the court of El Mansur (1190-1214) at Seville, to sing the Sultan's praises. We are told by Lady Lugard that early references describe this person as a "learned and cultured poet, a black of the Sudan, Abu Ishak al Kanemi".(4)

Although information on the internal affairs of Kanem is scarce for this period, these outward ripples indicate extensive contacts and peaceful relations between a well organized state and the rest of the Muslim world of the 12th and 13th centuries. Since the early Arabic travellers who came to Ghana, Mali and Songhai were often told of the existence of Kanem to the east, it can be assumed that contacts across the Sudan were kept up and utilized as much as the northerly ones.(5)

173 669 Local tradition in Bornu at the time of Barth's visit (1851) explained the eventual collapse of the great empire of Kanem in an interest-

(1) Ibn Said writing of the rule of Dunama Ahmed (1221-1295 A.D.) says it included present day Bornu. Later writers claimed that Bornu reached to the Nile in this period. (See, Barth, H. op. cit. Vol. II, p. 641.)
(2) Urvoy, Y. op. cit., 1949, p. 369.
(3) Burckhardt, J.L., Travels in Nubia, (London) 1819.
(4) Shaw, F.L., (Lady Lugard), op. cit. p 65.
(5) See, Battutu Ibn, Travels in Asia and Africa, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (London) 1929.

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669 ing fashion. The legend claims[1] that Dunama, the great 17th Mai of Kanem (1221-1259 A.D.) "laid the foundation for the ensuing disaster of the Empire by opening the sacred talisman of Bornu", for it (the talisman) called forth and provoked every powerful man to ambition and intrigues, and there followed after this reign a period of civil wars, and rapid changes in the monarchy, often involving regicide. It was at this time that the vassal state of the Bulala on the eastern boundary of Kanem grew towards an ever stronger independence, and finally toppled the Kanuri kingdom. We are told in the Chronicle translated by Barth that during the reign of the 27th Mai, Daud (1377-1386 A.D.) the Kanuri were decisively
[131] beaten by the Bulala.[2] By 1394 A.D., the 31st Mai, Omar (1394-1398 A.D.) finally gave up Kanem and came to Bornu proper to set up a kingdom in retreat somewhere between the present city of Maiduguri and the town of Gujba.

There followed a period of unrest and internal strife for about 75 years, during which many kings took the throne and were in turn overthrown or murdered. The kingdom was in a constant state of civil war
175 within and set upon by enemies from without. Palmer[3] in his researches
648 has found references to a letter sent at this time to Cairo from the Kanuri monarch, asking the Caliph to order the Arabs of Wadai to stop helping the Bulala raid amongst the Kanuri for slaves, since they (the Kanuri) were all good Muslims, and not infidels to be treated as potential slaves for the taking. More evidence of the "Sturm und Drang" quality of the period is indicated by the fact that a Mai of this time lived away from Bornu in the Hausa city of Kano which had been in the past a vassal state of the Kanuri empire.

(1) Barth, H., op. cit. Vol. II; King list, pp 633-671.
(2) Ibid; p. 634.
(3) Palmer, H. The Bornu Sahara and Sudan,(London) 1936, p. 218

4: Cohen E-5 (1956-1957) 1961
MS14 Kanuri MS14

121 work. This means that minute details of innovation and social life in general can be recorded at the level of the "common man" as contrasted with the analysis of regional or national productivity figures, or of government policies, or United Nations statistics. What emerges is not, therefore, a total picture of the development process, but rather a grass roots view of the reaction to planned culture change by the people at whom the programme was aimed in the first place.

The purpose of this article is to document and analyse an innovation that succeeded technically, and yet failed because the human components of the innovation experience were not taken into account.

101 The place is Africa, the time is 1956-57. But it could very well be the Near East, Asia or South America, anytime between 1940 and 1960. The people are the Kanuri of Bornu Province, Northern Nigeria, but they could be peasants anywhere.

The Context

174 The Kanuri of Bornu province in northeastern Nigeria have
175 been organized as a Muslim emirate in the Chad basin for
[131] many centuries. Their language classification by Greenberg
[642] (1954), early Arabic sources, and the scattered work of a few interested scholars, supports the notion of their continuity in the region, with possible origins somewhere to the northeast of
[177] their present habitat. The pre-colonial emirate kept up continual trade and cultural contacts with the Maghreb during its long history as an organized state.

161 The Kanuri number about one and a half million. The
311 population density is approximately sixty per square mile and there is no pressure on farmland, which can be extended simply by clearing new bush areas further away from the population
433 settlements. The majority of the people are peasants who carry
241 on three analytically separable economic activities. These consist
44 of (1) farming, primarily millet and guinea corn, supplemented by maize, beans, squashes, cucumbers, and groundnuts, (2) cash
[434] cropping, mostly groundnuts, and (3) a dry season non-farming activity connected with the market. Market activities are in